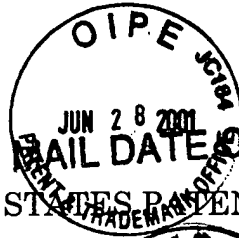


D. Lawrence
#6/a
7.11.01



PATENT
39D-1884 (81841.0019)

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application of:

George K. Shibata, *et al.*

Serial No: 09/335,363 ✓

Filed: June 17, 1999

For: SAMPLE LOADING AND
HANDLING INTERFACE TO
MULTIPLE CHEMISTRY
ANALYZERS

Art Unit: 1743

Examiner: P. Bex

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Date

AMENDMENT

Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Dear Sir:

RECEIVED
JUN 10 2001
TC 1700

In response to the Office Action dated April 16, 2001, please amend the
above-referenced application as follows:

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the text of the second paragraph on page 11, lines 8-19, with
the following text:

Whether in accessing sample tubes from the STAT locations or from the
many other sample tube locations within the illustrated four trays 32, sample tubes
34 are accessed using the gripper 40 of an overhead carriage assembly 42. The
gripper 40 includes opposing arms that can be brought together to grip and lift
successive sample tubes from the trays 32. Sample tubes are successively picked up
from the sample trays 32 and transported to the sample tube identification station.
Figure 2 shows a primary sample tube 44 positioned in the sample tube
identification station. Identification information is first read off of the tubes,
preferably using a tube spinner and an associated bar code reader, and then
aliquots are drawn from the sample tubes in accordance with the testing protocol

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